

# UNDERHILL PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, August 27, 2020 @ 6:00 PM

REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING (HELD REMOTELY)

Minutes

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## Attendance

### **Planning Commissioners:**

Commissioner Johnathan Drew, Chair\*  
Commissioner David Edson, Vice Chair\*  
Commissioner Patrick Lamphere\*  
Commissioner Kail Romanoff\*  
Commissioner Val Stori\*  
Commissioner Lea Van Winkle\*

Commissioner Sandy Wilmot\*

### **Staff/Municipal Representatives:**

Andrew Strniste, Planning Director\*

### **Others Present:**

Mt. Mansfield Community Television

\* This symbol denotes that this party joined via Go-To-Meeting.

To view the recording of the evening's meeting, visit the Mt. Mansfield Community Television website: <http://mtmansfieldctv.org>, or at the following link: <http://mtmansfieldctv.org/underhill-planning-cmsn-8-27-20/>

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[6:02] Chair J. Drew called the meeting to order by providing the introductory information of the evening's meeting. Due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic, the meeting was being held in accordance with Vermont State Law remotely. No general public was in attendance for the evening's meeting, and therefore, no general public comment was provided. No adjustments to the agenda were made.

## **AGENDA ITEM: UPDATES REGARDING ACTION ITEMS**

[6:04] The Planning Commissioner and Staff Member Strniste reviewed the actions that were assigned during the previous Planning Commission's meeting (see minutes of August 13, 2020) and provided updates about each task assigned, as applicable. Most action items were scheduled agenda items for the evening's meeting.

## **AGENDA ITEM: OLD BUSINESS – PLANNING COMMISSION & SOCIAL EQUITY IN UNDERHILL**

[6:10] Commissioner Stori provided an update about her inquiries with private firms to perform a social equity audit on the Town Plan and zoning regulation. She specifically informed the Commission about a scope of work obtained from Abundant Sun, which included seminars and an audit for a total budget of \$5,500. Chair J. Drew expressed his reservation about making changes to the Plan and how that may affect the approval received from Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC). Staff Member Strniste informed the Commission that he had a conversation with Regina Mahoney with CCRPC, and that any changes would have to be approved by the Planning Advisory Committee again, though likely not an obstacle.

Commissioner Edson opined that the commissioning of a private firm to perform a social equity audit was inappropriate. Commissioner Stori advised that part of the training would help provide a better understanding if the Plan is inadvertently disenfranchising sectors of the population. Discussions ensued about the recently organized committee group called ARC, budget relating to a potential audit and the Abundant Sun scope of work. Reservations were voiced about paying a

company to tell the Commission what they are supposed to think and what the final product will yield. Commissioner Romanoff opined that the commissioning of a private firm to perform an social equity audit would be similar to commissioning PlaceSense to perform a housing needs study. Chair J. Drew opined that address social equity as it relates to the Town Plan requires a long term effort, and should attempted by the Commission first.

- [6:29] Staff Member Strniste opined that the commissioning of a private firm to conduct a social equity audit was an opportunity to learn more and see if the Town is implicitly disenfranchising sectors of the population. The Commission agreed to review the social equity statement written by Chair J. Drew and talk to the Town of Essex/Village of Essex Junction who is in the midst of performing a social equity audit on their Plans. Commissioner Lamphere expressed reservations about a non-diverse amount of people making a decision relating to social equity for the entirety of Underhill. **The Commission is to review the equity statement disseminated by Chair J. Drew. Commissioner Stori will reach out to the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction.**

#### **AGENDA ITEM: OLD BUSINESS – PLANNING COMMISSION & SOCIAL EQUITY IN UNDERHILL**

- [6:43] Commissioner Wilmot informed the Board of the struggle the Natural Resources Inventory & Mapping Committee is having with renewable energy siting and the character of the area. When looking at the maps and trying to prioritize areas, scenic value appears to be the most important resource, and as a result, significantly inhibits the evaluation. A discussion ensued about where to site renewable energy, as well as methods to evaluate the scenic value of areas. The Commission then discussed mitigation factors and strategies, and how that corresponds with the Town Plan.

#### **AGENDA ITEM: OLD BUSINESS – UNDERHILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROPOSED REVISIONS**

- [6:43] The Commission discussed the proposed revisions to the Historical & Cultural Resources. The Commission reviewed the recommendations and address each one accordingly. Discussion ensued about the voluntary program of preserving historical structures, as well as how the voluntary program could be used to gauge public interest and how that could be used in the future to make future decisions. **Staff Member Strniste will make the discussed changes and disseminate to the Commission upon completion.**

#### **AGENDA ITEM: OLD BUSINESS – UNDERHILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROPOSED REVISIONS**

- [7:26] Commissioner Van Winkle provided an update relating to the Wi-Fi Capabilities in Underhill. Commissioner Wilmot suggested that in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that children have internet connectivity for school activities is important, and Commissioner Van Winkle suggested that ensuring internet connectivity is connected with social equity.

#### **AGENDA ITEM: OLD BUSINESS – 2020 TOWN PLAN UPDATES**

- [7:32] Staff Member Strniste informed the Commission that he had no updates relating to the 2020 Town Plan Updates. He then discussed that the Town of Jericho will be conducting public hearings relating to zoning amendments, and that he would monitor their procedures to see if that strategy could be adopted by the Underhill Planning Commission for their Town Plan hearings.

#### **AGENDA ITEM: APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S) & QUORUM FOR NEXT MEETING**

[7:34] Commissioner Van Winkle made a motion to approve the minutes of Thursday, July 23, 2020. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Romanoff and was approved unanimously.

[7:35] Commissioner Wilmot made a motion to approve the minutes of Thursday, August 13, 2020. The motion was seconded by Chair J. Drew and was approved unanimously.

[7:36] A quorum will be present at the Thursday, September 10, 2020.

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Respectfully Submitted By:  
Andrew Strniste, Planning Director

The minutes of the August 27, 2020 meeting were accepted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

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John Drew, Planning Commission Chair

### **New Action Items**

- ☐ *Commission* – The Commission is to review the equity statement disseminated by Chair J. Drew.
- ☐ *Commissioner Stori* – Reach out to the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction regarding the social audits being performed on their Plans.
- ☐ *Staff Member Strniste* – Invite Rick Heh to a future Planning Commission.
- ☐ *Staff Member Strniste* – Make the discussed changes to the Historic and Cultural Resources Chapter and disseminate to the Commission upon completion.

### **Ongoing Action Items**

- ☐ *Chair J. Drew* – Inquire with other boards, commissioners and committee about capital projects for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).
- ☐ *Commissioners Van Winkle & Drew* – Research Wi-Fi/Internet capabilities within Underhill.
- ☐ *Commissioners Wilmot & Stori* – Research potential renewable energy preferred sites within Underhill.
- ☐ *Commissioners Van Winkle* – Inquire with Chris Poley about joining the Commission in the fall once he has more availability.

### **Old, Incomplete Action Items**

- ☐ *Staff Member Strniste* – Update Planning Commission Calendar.

### **Completed Action Items**

- ☒ *Planning Commission* – Review the comments to the Historical & Cultural Resources Chapter submitted by the Underhill Society.
- ☒ *Commissioner Stori* – Inquire with various firms regarding a social equity audit of the proposed Town Plan and the Underhill zoning bylaws.
- ☒ *Chair J. Drew* – Draft social equity statement for draft Town Plan.

### **Deadlines**

- *None at the moment.*